Connect

Residents' newsletter

April 2017

FEATURING:

Your views and stories
Employment and Enterprise Group
Forthcoming events
Board member corner

St Martins
PARTNERS IN MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY

Welcome

I hope you enjoy this issue of Connect.

In an attempt to get as many voices as possible included in your newsletter, there are more conversations between residents included in this issue, and less one to one interviews.

Things change rapidly, and it is never possible to give more than a snapshot of what is happening. But reading this issue, I hope you will agree that amidst the ups and downs of life, there are many things to be proud of, lots to be thankful for and plenty more that we can all work hard to achieve.

Thank you to all the residents that have contributed to this issue including Mussa, Perry, Abdul, Ben, John, Philip, Richard, Carlos, Mansur and Nathan. Thank you also to all our residents who completed the Service User Survey and attended the Involvement Forum on 8 March.

John Thompson, Chief Executive
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Food, drink and politics

A few words from Perry

Food and drink are pretty important right. Me, I love a nice ice cold glass of water. There's nothing like it. I drink a lot of water. And I look forward to food. I use the microwave a lot. It's so easy to buy a meal from the supermarket, put it in... and DING! Meal's ready. I'm diabetic so I have to be careful what I eat and drink. I take tablets for my blood sugar. I should stop smoking really shouldn't I. That gets in your blood. It's very hard to give up. But maybe I could cut down.

I like listening to the radio. I've got two. I used to like listening to the news, but it's all politics, politics, politics now. Depressing... There's always depressing stuff on the news. So I prefer listening to a bit of pop music. There, we had a nice little chat didn't we. Bye. See you soon.

Board member corner

Meet Fiona Weir

I became a Board Member in 2016 following retirement. I had been an Operational Director at North East London Foundation Trust for 8 years. In this role I had been responsible for the development of mental health community services, as well as managing acute and in patient mental health services for the four boroughs. I was also a member of the Royal College of Psychiatry Rehab faculty executive committee.

Prior to this I worked in a senior management position for Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust for many years. In both Trusts I was the change management lead, leading on the redesign of community mental health services. I gained experience of integrating services and establishing partnership frameworks across health and social care.

I am a registered mental health nurse and have worked in mental health services for 40 years, both as a clinician and within management roles. I undertook a 3 year leadership programme through the Cabinet Office and have a management qualification. I also trained as a mentor for the National School of Government.

My reason for wanting to be on the Board at St Martins was to continue to support the development of recovery services for people with complex mental health needs. In my view this is an opportunity to continue to successfully support people to sustain their wellbeing.

Chalkhill Catchup

Gardening, cars and coaching

It is a Wednesday evening. A few of the guys have gathered, before a house meeting. Carlos starts talking about Lisbon before switching topic to talk about driving. "Davinder has just driven off in his car. I need to get my insurance sorted out, then I can drive. I'd like to do a trip to the seaside when it gets warmer. Perhaps I'll rent a car. Do you know if the insurance is included in the price?"

Mansur wants to talk about this evening's meeting. "The garden needs some work. Residents used to be paid vouchers for keeping it tidy, sweeping up the cigarette butts, cutting the grass and hedges. It's looking a bit ragged out there now and I think we need to do something. You need to use these meetings to bring up stuff that matters. You have to keep putting your point across, nag a bit. That's how things get done."

Nathan comes in from work. He has got a new job coaching the football team at Ealing hospital. "The job's good. I'm tired but happy," he says sitting down with a sigh and a smile. "I saw a car on fire on the way home." He pulls out his phone to show everyone some footage of the car, (not Davinders' luckily), pulled into the side of the road, engulfed in flames. Nathan's voice can be heard narrating what he's seeing. No one has been hurt. Nathan spoke to the driver who said the car was brand new and cost £70,000. "Perhaps my next job will be a news reader," he says laughing.

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Employment and Enterprise Group

St Martins has set up an Employment and Enterprise Group for its residents. Staff in this group include Nick at Wilton Villas, Adrian at New North Road, Steve from Chalkhill Road, Derek for Davenant and Caledonian Road, Dawn to help run activities, with John Thompson, Jon Mumford and Luke Roberts from Head Office giving further support.

What is the plan?

Step 1 is to involve you in Rake & Cake sessions, growing food to sell at St Martins Summer Fair on 7 July. All money made will go back into your activity budgets.

Step 2 is to involve you in making more space to grow food and flowers where you live. This will help make your home look and feel nicer.

Step 3 is to open a garden centre shop that will employ some of you. There is considerable research and planning to do before we look to open the shop in 2019. There will be interviews for working a few hours a week at the shop, which will be paid at an hourly rate. This won't happen until 2019. It will be open to current and former St Martins' residents, so don't worry if you plan to move on before then.

We need help!

The Group needs a few residents to act as Consultants for these plans. Consultants will need to attend Group Meetings every few months and then help us tell other residents what the plans are.

What's in it for me?

Consultants will be paid £10 in supermarket vouchers for attending Group Meetings and a further £10 in vouchers for spreading the word amongst other residents.

If you are interested, please tell a member of the Group, or a Manager. Thank you.

Rake & Cake gardening sessions with Dawn

Chalkhill Road
Mondays at 11am

Wilton Villas
Tuesdays at midday

New North Road
Wednesdays at 2pm

Davenant Days

Some of the guys are sat in the lounge chatting, half watching a cookery programme. A taxi pulls up outside and the driver helps to unload personal possessions; bags of clothes, a couple of pictures, a TV.

"A new person's moving in." says John. The guys wonder if the new person will be ready to go to the cinema trip they've planned this afternoon.

Philip loads up the trailer for The Great Wall on You Tube. Matt Damon dressed as an ancient Chinese Warrior, is surrounded by battle and fire. "We're seeing this one," he says.

Richard doesn't fancy the cinema. "There's lots of activities," he says. "Days out, bowling, I go for bike rides to Finsbury Park with Andrew. You can't do them all. And I'm spending time going to these workshops about looking for jobs. You have to go, or lose your benefits. I was at workshop all day yesterday. So today I am going to take it easy."

Outside, through the patio doors and up a couple of steps is the new shed. It has some chairs inside and a mirror on the back wall. "We use it for one to one meetings," says John. "It can be a bit cold, but things are warming up and it's getting nice out there."

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Mussa the mechanic Part II

In the last issue, we had a feature about Mussa's search for a job. Here is an update on the story.

I started working for a garage in Hackney at the end of January. It is a family business. The father, his two daughters and two sons all work there. It's a massive garage, big enough to fit 10 trucks into.

It's very noisy, very dirty, lots of oil everywhere. I come home with my overalls covered in oil. There is noise from all the engines being tested and we often have loud music on to help us work. I love it. I love the noise and the busyness of the workshop. There is always loads to do. The most common problem with trucks is overheating of the engine with the result that oil and water leak and mix. But there are lots of things that can go wrong that need fixing.

The owner is pleased to have me working for him. He says I am a good worker. I am working 3 days a week from 9-6. It is voluntary work, but he pays me expenses and gives me enough money to buy food for the whole week. They are good people. I told them I have a mental illness and they said that's fine, just tell us if you feel tired or unwell and you don't have to come to work. It is voluntary after all and I am helping them make a profit. Everyone is happy.

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More activities and events

Come and join in!

New North Road, Wilton Villas & The Simon Julien Suite

- Art class with Demi on Monday afternoons
- Mens' group – every 2nd Tuesday
- Relaxation, Health and Wellbeing with Clare on Wednesdays
- Nutrition with Gularanna on Thursday afternoons
- Film night – every Saturday
- Media discussion group every Sunday
- Daily breakfast group (Wilton Villas only)
- Drug drop in clinic – 2nd Tuesday in the month
- Zoolab – the last Monday in the month.

Davenant Road & Caledonian Road

- Try something new Mondays
- Breakfast club on Thursdays
- Newspaper Group on Fridays
- Easy cooking every other Friday
- Sunday lunch once a month
- Ladies' Group once a month (no set day)

Chalkhill Road

- Friday healthy cooking
- Sunday special league once a month
- Sunday brunch

There will also be a bowling trip, swimming, fishing and fitness classes coming soon. Details will be discussed in House Meetings, so please come and help decide when we do all these things.

Over to you!

If you have an idea for an activity you'd like to do, please talk to your key worker or a Manager.